

# Citi Bike Is Up, Condoms Are Down: New York by Some Numbers

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**Highlight:** The Mayor's Management Report reveals New York City government in glorious minutiae, from the number of potholes filled to the number of condoms distributed.

## Body

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Each year, City Hall produces a trove of data on how well (or poorly) government operates in New York City, measuring the essential, the mundane and the arcane. Called the Mayor's Management Report, it provides information on government performance, organized by the city's fiscal year, which ends June 30.

Among the findings in the latest report, released this week: The Fire Department response time to building fires ticked up slightly, to 4 minutes and 58 seconds in the 2018 fiscal year, compared with 4 minutes and 49 seconds four years earlier; 239,426 potholes were repaired on local streets; and annual memberships in Citi Bike increased 11.8 percent from the previous year.

Here's a closer look at some other findings:

Clean streets. Really?

The report said that 95.1 percent of streets and 97.1 percent of sidewalks were rated "acceptably clean." Those numbers have been pretty much the same for years, which would lead many New Yorkers to wonder: What streets and sidewalks is the city examining? And whose definition of acceptably clean is the city using?

In contrast, only 0.2 percent of streets and sidewalks were rated "filthy."

Natalie Grybauskas, a spokeswoman for Mayor Bill de Blasio, said that inspectors regularly go out in teams of two to evaluate streets to compile cleanliness scorecards to measure the effectiveness of the city's street sweeping program. The rating system measures the amount of loose litter, such as soda bottles or paper, which would normally be picked up by the street sweeping machines.

Their methods do not include a smell test, she said.

Falling short on climate change

Mr. de Blasio has tried to cast himself as a leader in the fight against climate change; last week he flew to San Francisco to speak at the Global Climate Action Summit. Yet the report shows that, at least in some measures, the city is behind on its own goals.

In the 2018 fiscal year, the city fell short in how much it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions in city buildings. The city estimated that improvements to the energy efficiency of its buildings resulted in an estimated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of more than 38,000 metric tons. But the city had set a goal of a reduction of more than 50,000 metric tons.

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The target for the 2019 fiscal year has been set at 40,000 metric tons. Seth Stein, a mayoral spokesman, said the lower number reflected the expected retrofit projects that will be completed in the current fiscal year.

### Less H.I.V. but fewer condoms

The new report illustrates some public health categories that saw significant gains under Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, but have stalled during Mr. de Blasio's tenure.

The adult smoking rate has plateaued at about 13 percent. About a quarter of all adults are obese, just as when Mr. de Blasio took office. And more than one in five adults drink an average of one or more sugar-sweetened beverages a day.

But other health trends are more promising. The number of new diagnoses of H.I.V., the virus that causes AIDS, continues a long-term downward trend, falling to 1,953 during the fiscal year, a reduction from 3,016 four years earlier and 4,186 in the 2009 fiscal year. But the number of syphilis cases has increased markedly, to 1,775 in the 2018 fiscal year, up from 1,234 in the 2014 fiscal year. That increase is part of a national trend, which the health department noted last year, as it promoted condom use as a preventive measure against H.I.V.

Against that backdrop, the city fell far short in its condom distribution program last fiscal year. Only 20.9 million condoms were distributed, compared with an average of 36.4 million annually during the previous four years.

A health department spokesman said the shortfall was the result of a reduction in federal funding for H.I.V. prevention.

### What's left out

Because the Mayor's Management Report is created by City Hall and is often used to trumpet the mayor's accomplishments, what the report leaves out can be as noteworthy as what it includes.

The first section of the report, for example, focused on ThriveNYC, the mental health initiative that is headed by the mayor's wife, Chirlane McCray, who is contemplating running for office. Ms. McCray rarely speaks in public without highlighting the city's mental health hotline, 1-888-NYC-WELL, and asking her audience to recite the number out loud.

But there is little information about the operations of the hotline in the report. It says that in fiscal year 2018 the hotline took in 256,569 calls. But it does not say anything about how those calls were handled, what kind of services callers were directed to or the success rate of connecting callers with treatment.

NYC WELL was created in October 2016, essentially by rebranding and adding resources to an existing mental health hotline. The hotline saw an immediate increase, with the volume of calls more than doubling. But it is not clear how much the heavily promoted hotline has continued to grow.

The hotline answered an average of about 21,000 calls a month during the last fiscal year. The report said that in the 2017 fiscal year, the hotline answered 152,600 calls, which works out to an average of about 19,000 calls a month for the eight months that the new hotline was in operation.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Tony Savino/Corbis, via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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